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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
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INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 7476
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 3010
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE 3510
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA IMMEDIATE 2158
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA IMMEDIATE 0031
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA IMMEDIATE 4505
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE IMMEDIATE 5946
RUEHKS0/AMCONSUL SAPPORO IMMEDIATE 2717
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI IMMEDIATE 7244
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
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RUEATRS/TREASURY DEPT WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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DEPARTMENT FOR S/ES-CR, S/ES-O, EAP/J

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SUBJECT: MESSAGE FROM FORMER DPJ PRESIDENT MAEHARA TO
PRESIDENT OBAMA

1. On January 28, 2009, Embassy Tokyo received a congratulatory letter to President Barack Obama from Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Vice President Seiji Maehara. Following is the English translation provided by the DPJ International Department. The original letter will be sent via diplomatic pouch.

2. Begin text:

His Excellency, Mr. Barack Obama
President of the United States

Dear President Obama:

Congratulations on your inauguration as the honorable 44th President of the United States of America.

I believe that your inaugural address given in Washington DC in the depths of winter has captured the minds, and given courage and hope, not only to the citizens of the United States, but also to the citizens of countries suffering from war and conflict, and to the children and young people, workers, homemakers and seniors around the world who desire peace and happiness. I am also one of those people. I, for one, tasked with national policy in Japan, felt a sense of empathy with your perspective of this era and your strong commitment. Being a politician of the same generation across the Pacific, I wish to be able to stand together with you as a genuine partner in your journey for change.

Our generations share the challenging responsibility of protecting the values of peace and prosperity achieved by our forefathers through painstaking effort and sacrifice. And in this unprecedented time of transition, we share the mission of passing the torch of change to future generations by standing up with courage to the fundamental challenges of global dimensions. To this end, there is a need to forge a genuine friendship, extending beyond national borders and ethnic groups, building a cooperative relationship where we

can speak to each other without reserve and at times say to each other what may be unpleasant to the ear.

It is not only the United States under your leadership that requires a remaking. Japan also is standing on the edge of a serious challenge. Traditionally, Japanese society cherished the values of social harmony and unity. There is not a single junior high school student in Japan who does not know Commodore Perry or General MacArthur as a part of our history. It is clear that the rapid modernization after the Meiji Restoration as well as the miraculous reconstruction and growth after the unfortunate World War have been the result of fusion and integration of traditional Japanese culture with the United States and other Western civilization. It is no exaggeration to say that the history of Japan over the past two thousand years was a history of integrating culture introduced from overseas.

On a personal point, I was able to continue my studies thanks to the scholarship I was granted throughout my eight years of high school and university. Unlike your country, not everybody was able to enjoy that fortune in the educational environment offered in Japan in those days. In my case, even after graduating from university, I was given the opportunity to continue with my studies as a scholarship fellow at the Matsushita Institute of Government and Management, a foundation presided by the late Konosuke Matsushita, founder of Panasonic. I have become what I am today owing to the discipline of many of my teachers and support from society over a total of twelve years. I am grateful for having been

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the son of my respected parents and at the same time, a son of society. I would not doubt for a moment the importance of delivering the same opportunity to future generations.

In Japan, however, these traditional values of social integration are rapidly diluting in recent times. With the growing disparity and division among regions and income groups, and the breakdown of the Japanese style lifelong employment system, poverty, which appeared to have been eradicated for half a century, has reemerged as a real issue, aggravating social difficulties. That does not mean, however, that we can simply wind back our clocks and solve our problems merely by reverting back to our old customs when activities of individuals and companies go beyond national borders with human resources, capital, technology, and information extending all over the world for economic activity.

Today, our countries and the entire world have entered a stage where we need to merge and integrate seemingly opposing concepts such as markets vs government, environment vs economy, governmental authorities vs non-profit organizations, sovereign states vs global institutions, to achieve genuine change rather than be constrained by the dualistic confrontation structure of the past. I regard it as my mission to rebuild a society that can embrace different individuals and regions with harmony and compassion while preserving economic and social vitality through healthy competition in a market economy.

In this context, I am following with keen interest the reform of domestic and foreign policy that you have embarked upon. In particular, the world today is faced with an unprecedented economic and fiscal crisis as well as numerous challenges including the environment, energy, food, water, and other global issues. I am looking forward to the United States, under your leadership, to give higher priority to the environment and new sources of energy, and agricultural and food policies that attach greater importance to nature and her natural cycle. I intend to do my best to build strong cooperation between Japan and the United States in these areas.

The value of peace has never been so high as today. When we

look back on history, those in power face the greatest temptation to incite nationalism in times of difficulty. As symbolized by your deliberate reference to patriotism, we have to continue to be patriots without being exclusionary to others. Exploring ways to achieve compatibility among patriotism, cooperation extending beyond nations and regions, and love for humankind is one of the essential challenges that global leaders ought to focus their greatest efforts. From this perspective, with the start of your administration, it would be most important for Japan and the United States, with different cultures and customs while sharing universal values, to learn from each other their respective cultural and social background for an evolution in the Japan-US Alliance and global partnership to be able to make a contribution to the citizens of our countries and to the future of humankind.

Japan also finds itself precisely on the eve of a change of government and the far-reaching changes that it will bring. We cannot hope to see any progress in human society with the cynicism that has spread widely not only in the United States, but also in Japan and the entire world. No matter how capable a leader may be, a handful of people will not be able to totally change the entire world, but even just a handful of individuals can become a flash point for major

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change. Whether we are Americans or Japanese or Africans, what is important is to be able to continue to light up a flame in people's hearts, and continue together on the sometimes difficult but enormously fulfilling journey for change. My heart has been filled with excitement to hear your strong commitment to have the United States start off a tidal wave of change to reach all peoples and regions, and to know that in you we have a genuine partner of my own generation on this difficult but fulfilling journey. At the same time, Mr. President, I sincerely hope you will be mindful that here in Japan and Asia, and in Europe, in Africa, in Latin America, in the Middle East, and throughout the world, there are more than a few genuine partners who are willing to travel with you on that difficult journey. I wish you the greatest success as a global leader in this new multi-polar age.

Your Excellency, I extend to you my sincere hopes for your continued health and success and shall be looking forward to meeting you in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Seiji Maehara
Member of the House of Representatives
(Vice President of the Democratic Party of Japan)

End text.
ZUMWALT